

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, February 11, 1901

Volta Bureau, February 11, 1901. Monday. Dear Mabel: —

Saturday's mail brought me at last a letter from you, dated Tuesday, Jan. 29, and written on the Steamer Majestic the day before you reached Queenstown.

Knowing from your cablegram that you had seen Queen Victoria's funeral procession in London, I was hoping against hope that your letter would contain some account of the funeral, &c., so that it was a great disappointment to find — from your letter — THAT YOU HADN'T LANDED YET! It seems such an eternity since you left that it is difficult to realize that only a sufficient time has elapsed to allow of a letter from Queenstown. Electricity is better than ink — the telegraph brings us into instantaneous contact, but it has this disadvantage that it imparts to a letter just received from the other side of the Atlantic — a distinct flavor of antiquity. Still, the details are very interesting (because the telegraph didn't anticipate them).

But, I hope you won't be running off to Ice o I and with Mr. Magumson (?) or to Africa with Bishop Hartzell (I suppose by the time you receive this letter you will have forgotten who they were. 2 Should you have entered into any agreement with the Bishop to go as missionary to East Africa, I hope you will follow the example of the young passenger who decided to break his engagement and return to his wife and children in spite of the criticism of the lady passengers. I wish I had had your opportunity of crossing the Atlantic with Percival Lowell. I wonder whether you talked with him about Mars. Miss Sartoris I should like to have seen, though I suppose — like yourself — I should not have advanced at all with her.

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That sermon of the Bishop's must have been very interesting and I should like to have heard it. Well, I have heard it through your ears — or rather I should say through your mother's and quite agree with his high encomiums on good Queen Victoria. His remarks, too, on the Boer War are interesting — though evidently tinged with Anglican ideas. I can realize that there are two sides to the question — and while I hope the British will succeed in pacifying the whole country under their own rule (because they represent a higher type of civilization) I feel as much sympathy for the Boers as I do for the British. The Boers — with their medieval notions — and narrow straight laced religious beliefs — must be most uncomfortable folk to live with, but THEY'LL MAKE GRAND ANCESTORS.!

Since writing you last about Census matters, I have been at work upon specific tables for the tabulation of the returns of the Blind and the Deaf, and I have just sent down to Dr. Wines some specimens of tables, which will give him an idea of the way I propose to handle the subject.

I am just telephoned for to go down to the Census Office, and shall have to stop here for the present

INTERRUPTED.

Dear Mrs. Bell: —

Mr. Bell was called down to the Census Office, and so I will have to send off this fragment of a letter. He was just getting down to write you a nice long letter, it is a shame.

We miss you dreadfully, but I am glad you are well and are having a nice time. Mr. Bell is quite well I think. He seems to be all right. His Wednesday evenings are a great success he says.

There is a black enamel wreath pin here belonging to you. What shall we do with it.

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With love to Daisy, and a great deal for yourself,

Sincerely yours, Bessie A Soffud